



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2008**

**4:00 – 6:30 PM**

**COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Commissioners

Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair  
Rebecca Fishman  
Michael Sonnenreich  
Lavinia Wohlfarth  
Rhona Wolfe Friedman, Vice Chair

Staff

Gloria Nauden, Executive Director  
Lionell Thomas, Deputy Director  
Dolores Kendrick, Poet Laureate  
Catherine Cleary, Interim Grants Manager  
Rachel Dickerson, DC Creates Public Art Manager  
Moshe Adams, Grants Program Assistant

I. Call to Order:

Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

II. Directors Report:

Director commended the DCCA staff on the “amazing” work they are doing. She mentioned the Arts Education efforts and the great improvements.

Director mentioned the staff retreat and the creative leadership Dr. Mancusi.

The Executive Director reviewed her beginning efforts in becoming acquainted with the staff and programs by using the team interview process.

III. Chair’s Report:

Chair mentioned the DanceDC Festival. She commended the amazing amount of work and the terrific talent involved. She would like to see more marketing.

The Chair went to the opening of The Duke Ellington Jazz Festival and attended a meeting on the Adams/Morgan kiosk. The moving of the kiosk is delayed until public art and the Department of Transportation communicate. The Chair also commented on the beautiful new pieces at the Wilson Building. The Chair commended the inclusion of Commission names next to the pieces of art and the artists’ names.

Commissioner Sonnenreich attended the Kids Euro Festival. The Commissioners noted that they would like to have received their invitations to the kick off event earlier.

Vice Chair, Rhona Wolfe Friedman will speak at the House of Sweden and invites all Commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Wohlfarth attended the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation in Baltimore. Commissioner Wohlfarth intends on spending more time nurturing the relationships she created there. She observed that public art was very much an emphasis. They meet quarterly. Commissioner Sonnenreich mentioned having a reception for the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation.

Commissioner Sonnenreich expressed concern about the lack of a mechanism for grantees to show how funds were spent. The Chair stated that the Director and Deputy Director had spoken about the accountability of grantees in the final report process.

The Chair announced that Rod Little has resigned from the Commission and joined the staff at DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

#### IV. Poet Laureate's Report:

The Poet Laureate spoke about publicity for Metro Bus Poetry. She was pleased because the Poet Laureate position was becoming more visible. She mentioned the highly creative young people who participate with the program. She commended the schools and teachers on their participation.

Ms. Kendrick will be attending a ceremony for the D.C. Hall of Fame in which she will be honored. The D.C. Hall of Fame was explained to the Committee.

Ms. Kendrick was invited to the E.L Haynes Charter School. Ms. Kendrick will cut the ribbon for the opening of the school.

#### V. Grant Program—Festivals DC:

The Legislative and Grants Manager, Catherine Cleary, explained the goals of the program and introduced the panel representative, Rob Bettmann.

Under the direction and guidance of the Commissioners/Co-Conveners Michael Sonnenreich and Rogelio Maxwell and Catherine Cleary, Interim Legislative and Grants Manager, panelists adhered to the recommended review process. A total of 33 applications were submitted, one of which was deemed ineligible. Of the 33 applications reviewed, the total amount of funds requested was \$ \$822,063.00. The panel recommended funding for 17 applicants, totaling \$349,925.00, based on their merit.

The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:

1. The Commission should provide a clearer definition of festival.
2. Returning applicants should provide documentation from the festival conducted during the previous fiscal year in their new application.
3. Work samples should be loaded onto DCCAH's website.

4. Staff should have a minimum amount of oversight of budget accuracy and compliance.

The Chair noted that festivals that have traditionally been funded but did not receive funding. Mr. Bettmann said that the panel looked at the impact on the arts community: the number of people impacted and the value of the art. Mr. Bettman also mentioned the panelists' concern over the vagueness of the Commission's definition of a festival.

#### Discussion:

The Poet Laureate asked about the Prisons Foundation and the work that they do. The Legislative and Grants Manager explained their programming, events and purpose.

The Chair questioned the criteria that the panel used to evaluate Festivals DC. The Deputy Director requested changing comment page so that the comments were consistent.

The Vice Chair expressed difficulty with the Washington, DC International Film Festival because the director of that organization stated that he would not appeal for money from the Commission again. She felt that it was inappropriate to ask more funding. The Committee questioned a possible conflict of interest on the part of the executive director of the festival, due to his prior service as a Commission staff member. The Chair noted that the former staff member had not received funds through the grant process while on staff. Previous funding was a pass through.

Commissioner Wohlfarth added that this has always been an important program for the city. Commissioner Sonnenreich felt that the aforementioned application would be difficult to turn down based on previous granting.

#### Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Wohlfarth and seconded by Commissioner Fishman that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations.

\* Motion Carried

3 in favor, 1 opposed

#### VI. Metropolitan Branch Trail

Rachel Dickerson, Public Art Manager, gave an overview of the Metropolitan Branch Trail, presented the draft of the proposed art and introduced the artist, Robert Kent Wilson. A draft map was provided for Committee review.

A local public artist from a design firm in Mt. Pleasant was chosen to develop the program. Due to the lack of cohesive methods to get people to and from locations, an artist well versed in signage and way finding was necessary. The DC Department of Transportation worked with the artist to make versions of possible signage. Separate sign templates and details were added to fit each location. Signage will be added to existing signs or objects.

Future Marketing Outreach:

One suggestion was the breaking up the trail respective to different communities. Also, a neighborhood child bike trail was suggested so that separate communities can unite over the trail.

Vice Chair Friedman asked about the Commission's name and/or logo being present on some of the signage.

Commissioner Sonnenreich asked about the condition of the trail and paving.

The Chair asked about the usage of the word "Branch." Commissioner Wohlfarth responded that this was the original name of the trail.

Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations.

\* Motion carried

Unanimous

XV. Old & New Business

The Legislative and Grants Manager mentioned the completion of the Commission's application to the National Endowment for the Arts.

Commissioner Friedman requested an executive session.

XVII. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the meeting adjourn.

\* Motion Carried

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 5:42.